

(Photo by Pfc. Miranda Mutimer 2-10 Mtn.)

Make your cake and eat it too!

Pvt. Kevin Hladilek, a food service specialist with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and native of Kenosha, Wis., decorates a birthday cake at the Commando Café on Camp Striker, Iraq March 5.

Northern Qada leaders take steps toward self-reliance

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Iraqi government leaders took one more step toward the independence they seek for their newly democratic country this week.

Qada leaders from four of the six Baghdad Qada rural communities - much like U.S. counties - held a Northern Qada Government Conference here March 10. Senior leaders from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division along with U.S. military advisors from the

Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team facilitated the meeting which was held at the Command Sgt. Maj. Sam Cooke Dining Facility.

Lessons in governance come in historical references, from the U.S. gaining its independence from Great Britain to Russian republics breaking away from their mother country, each instance involved nations taking their first small steps to becoming their own self-governed and self-sufficient bodies - working to make their own way for their people.

It was with that same goal in mind and

with the intense focus on getting Iraq back on its feet, that was the underpinning of the meeting, said 1st BCT Commander, Col Paul E. Funk II.

"Our role here is to support you -the government leaders-in the establishment and maintenance of a functional, democratically elected government," Funk said to the Qada members.

"Now is a momentous time for the Taji region," he added. "As elected and appointed officials, you are responsible to the Iraqi

See Leaders Page 4

Chaplain finishes career with First Team

By Sgt. Joy Pariente
1st Cav. Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas - Some people call it coincidence, to some it's fate but, to others it's more of a divine intervention. Sometimes things happen at just the right time, like getting hired for your dream job when you can't take your current job anymore. Other times, things happen that you don't want to happen, but you realize later that no matter how good or bad the occurrence, it happened at that moment for a specific reason.

According to Chaplain (Col.) DeWayne L. Brewer these are all examples of God's impeccable timing and ability to give us what we need exactly when or far before we really need it.

In his 30 years of service, Brewer, a reserve chaplain mobilized to serve the 1st Cavalry Division's rear detachment, the Lord's timing has played a vital role in his career. Even after being passed over for multiple promotions and being forced out of the Army five times during his career, Brewer keeps ending up back serving and doing what he loves. "What I love has deeply hurt me," Brewer explained. "That is the essence of life and of love."

It's part of God's timing and plan, he



(Photo by Sgt. Joy Pariente 1st Cav. Public Affairs)

Chaplain (Col.) DeWayne Brewer, the 1st Cavalry Division Rear chaplain, dawns his "Stetson" one last time at the Ironhorse dining facility, March 7. explained. "The Army said 'we don't need you anymore', but the Lord had a purpose and brought me back to the Army."

"I don't know of any other way to finish up than with America's First Team," Brewer said. "With this last assignment God gave me a wonderful gift. It's the second time God's helped me close out something with an amazing assignment."

The first closure was when Brewer fin-

ished his active duty career as a transportation officer with the 106th Transportation Battalion; the same unit his career began in. Brewer's active duty career was cut short after 15 years when the Army was drawing down forces in 1992. Brewer took the separation package option and decided to go to seminary school back home in Kentucky.




Upon finishing school, Brewer was accepted into the Army Reserves as a major in the chaplain corps.

Since then, Brewer has divided his time between his civilian and military ministries. "I don't want to get out, but the Lord reminds me that He gave me all these years to serve even when I thought it was over," Brewer said. "In removing me from the Army, He reminded me that my identity is not in the Army. My security is not in the Army. It is in Christ, it's in Him."

Brewer will be heading back to Kentucky where he'll be with his wife of 31 years, Sheri. He is looking forward to either working as a hospice chaplain or a minister at a church.

"If we pass on not just our experiences, but the story of love because that's what carries on. Love for what we do, for the nation, for the Lord and for one another," Brewer said.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report	Today	Tomorrow	Thursday
			
High: 81 Low: 54	High: 77 Low: 55	High: 61 Low: 50	

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(Photo by Spc. Karly Cooper 15th SB Public Affairs)

Sgt. Shameka Kimp, a chaplain's assistant from HHC, 15th BTB, 15th SB, performed the poem, Phenomenal Woman, at the Women's History Month observance March 7 at the base theater.

Women's 'Her Story' Month

**Spc. Karly Cooper
15th SB Public Affairs**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Soldiers from around the "WagonMaster" footprint took time to recognize Women's History Month at the Camp Taji base theater Mar. 7.

Sponsored by the 867th Corps Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, unit equal opportunity teams highlighted females from past and present who touched lives with their determination and achievements.

Lt. Col. Angela Odom, 15th Personnel Services Battalion commander, spoke of her grandmother, who just celebrated her 101st birthday. Odom delighted the crowd with stories describing what a great influence she has been in her life. Close to her grandmother since she was a small child, Odom felt that her grandma would be a great person to honor.

Women's History Month has expanded in the military since the inception of Women's History Week in 1978. In 1987, a joint Congressional resolution expanded the celebration from a one-week observance, to the entire month of March in recognition of females.

"People often ask why we have these observances for these months," Odom said.

"We take this moment to learn about facts that were once obscured and what it takes to create 'Her Story'".

Staff Sgt. Ronnie Larmeu, the 867th CSB equal opportunity representative, spoke on television talk show tycoon Oprah Winfrey, and her rise within the media realm. Since the mid 1980s, Winfrey continues to reach out and touch the lives of people all over the world.

Sgt. Shameka Kimp, a chaplain's assistant with the 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, read a poem called 'Phenomenal Woman'. Her interpretation showcased the broad spectrum of what it takes to be a female.

"It doesn't matter if you're a mother at home, vacuuming with a baby on your hip or you are the chief executive officer at a multi million dollar corporation, she is phenomenal," she said.

"It's so neat that even though we are combat that these events are being highlighted; it's a lot of fun and is something for the Soldiers to look forward to," said Spc. Emily Gold, an administrative assistant with the 1687th Combat HET Company.

Throughout the celebration, speakers continued to emphasize the point, "Do not allow others to determine how much you can achieve; keep your joy and dreams."

Baghdad in Brief

'Wolverine' Squadron finds two IED caches

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers discovered two caches of improvised explosive device ordnance and materials southwest of Baghdad March 11.

Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment 'Wolverines,' 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) discovered a cache while on a security patrol in the village of Kuresh, about a mile north of a major highway leading into Baghdad.

The cache included 11 57mm anti-aircraft rounds, three rocket propelled grenade projectiles, a 122mm artillery round, five 120mm artillery rounds, three 60mm mortar rounds, two 81mm mortar rounds and one 105mm artillery round.

In a second event, Troop A, 1-89 Cav discovered a cache of IED-triggering devices including detonation cord, two blasting caps, two hand-held radios, six washing machine timers and assorted wires and batteries near the village of Radwanayah, southwest of the Baghdad International Airport.

Both caches were disposed of by explosive ordnance disposal teams.

Iraqi Army Battalion discovers weapons cache

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq - Iraqi Army Soldiers discovered an improvised explosive device and mortar round cache five kilometers northwest of here March 11.

Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division discovered the cache at approximately 3:20 p.m.

The cache was comprised of seven 120mm mortar rounds, 68 82mm mortar rounds, 57 60mm mortar rounds, 44 blasting caps and one pound of TNT.

The ordnance was destroyed in a controlled detonation.

Meeting marks another step closer to democracy

Leaders

From Page 1

people. We need you to step up and take responsibility for your areas. You know your people and problems better than us, so I ask you to help us help you."

"We came together here to try to solve some of the problems the people in the Qadas are facing, and this meeting really complements our previous conference held in Baghdad," said Kadhim Atitya Kadhim, a Taji regional chairman who oversees the four provincial Qadas. "We hope this is just one of many more meetings to come."

City council members from the Tarmiya Qada, Instaqal Qada, Abu Ghraib Qada and Taji Qada were in attendance.

Each Qada has three branches that include a Qada council incorporating members from each of the villages or towns in the Qada, a Qa'im Makim who is an executive official similar to a mayor who implements the plans of regional/Qada councils and a Technical branch made up of officials responsible for public works and essential services.

One discussion in the conference involved each level of government's responsibility in approving contracts for projects that are designed to improve the quality of life of those living in the Qadas.

"This will involve power sharing at all three branches of the local government and very little involvement by coalition forces," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, 1st BCT's deputy commanding officer and a native of Austin, Texas.

Andrysiak also provided some suggestions on how Iraqis



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Speaking from a podium, Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, 1st Brigade Combat Team's deputy commanding officer, facilitates a Northern Qada Government Development Conference held March 10 on Camp Taji, Iraq.

could complete a project and at the same time employ their own people to finish it. Andrysiak cited an example from the Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works in which the U.S. had paid twice as much to complete a project that could have been done better by Iraqis, he said.

"Iraqis could have done the project for themselves cheaper, which would involve hiring Iraqis and this will help small Iraqi business contractors," said Andrysiak addressing the Qada members.

"The Qada councils are now helping us to get funding to do projects with coalition forces," said Kadhim. "The last meeting empowered us to supervise a water treatment plant and to select contractors."

Other topics discussed involved bringing hospitals to the Qadas and projects to improve sewage systems and water plants.

"We are working to finish some essential services to fix them and place the Qadas on the right path. Unfortunately, in central Baghdad there is only a par-

tial sewage system and these were built in 1965 as drains for simple drainage," said Kadhim, explaining one of the projects on which the Qada leaders are seeking assistance.

"We recently met with leather industries in Iraq which have been introduced to a prominent U.S. store chain and we are very close to seeing Iraqi goods being shipped to the U.S.," said Lt. Col. John Holtzman, a Multi-National Division- Baghdad governance officer who hails from Shamokin Dam, Pa., as he spoke to the Qada representatives. "This will involve using (animal) hides from various parts of Iraq and this should be very good news to everyone in this room and the people of Iraq."

Although throughout the conference, U.S. and coalition forces played a role in helping the Qadas, it is a small one, and the main focus is all about Iraqis helping Iraqis to stand on their own, said Lt. Col. Robert Ruch, deputy team leader for the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"What we're generally trying

to do is to get them focused on their own internal relations," said Ruch, who hails from Springfield, Pa. "We're all about creating linkages, making sure that the different levels of government are truly representative of the people and their needs-so that down at the Nahia and Qada levels, the people actually feel that the provisional government cares about them and is going to provide something for them."

"So that's what this does, it provides linkages between the Iraqis," Ruch added. "I really feel like we're making a difference and when we leave there will be a system in place that will endure."

Ruch said he has heard nothing but good responses from Qada representatives who have attended the conferences.

"They've been extremely positive, especially the regional council," he said. "They have really pushed us to try and help them get their arms around the issues out in the Qadas, and they've been really appreciative of our help."

Another meeting of the northern Qadas is projected for April.

Intelligence Soldier enjoys new Army life

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD - He was born, along with seven other siblings, into the poverty of inner-city Detroit. His parents, addicted to drugs, were unable to care for him.

Consequently, Michael was turned over to foster care to be raised by the system at the tender age of eight. Few people would have given a child facing such an uphill battle much of a chance.

However in 1995 everything changed. The once seemingly lost child was found by the Floyd family, which adopted him and moved him away from the dangers of Detroit's mean streets to the relative security of suburban Michigan, Pfc. Michael Floyd said.

After graduating from high school, Floyd chose to follow in the footsteps of his step-father and brother, who previously served in the Army, he said.

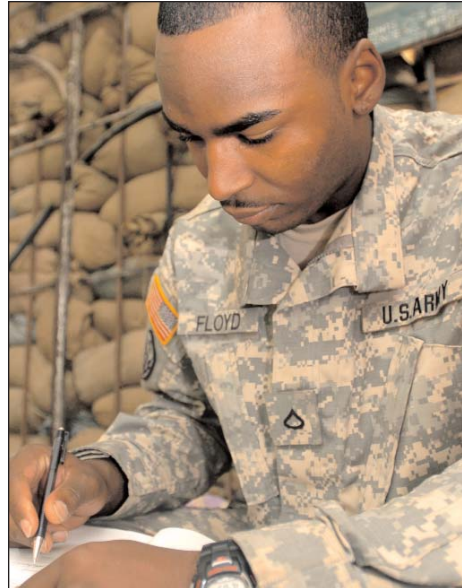
"I wanted to help my country. That's a cliché answer, but that's the truth. I remember looking back when 9-11 happened. I was only a freshman in high school. I never thought I would be close to anything going on. Now I'm right in the middle of it," said the human intelligence collector and member of a tactical human team. "I just wanted to do my part. I wanted experience."

Following five months of advance individual training at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and less than a year at Fort Hood, Texas, Floyd is experiencing the Global War on Terrorism firsthand. He is assigned to 1st Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 504th Military Intelligence Brigade, which supports 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

The team he is a member of runs source operations, gathers intelligence, interrogates suspects and tactically questions people. The mission of the team is to gather information for the maneuver unit, Floyd said.

Since deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in August, Floyd has seen his fair share of action on the volatile streets of Baghdad.

"It's been a very trying seven months to say



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

Pfc. Michael Floyd, human intelligence collector and member of a tactical human team, HHC, 504th MI Bde., supporting 2nd Bn., 12th Inf. Regt., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div., studies interview notes inside COP "Casino" in the Ghazaliya district of Baghdad Jan. 28.

the least," Floyd said. "This place is surreal. Before you come over here you know it exists. But it really doesn't exist until you come over here."

Two months into his first deployment, Floyd was rudely awakened to life down-range when his convoy made contact with a roadside bomb, he said.

"It just made me open my eyes and realize we are really here now," Floyd said.

Fortunately no one was seriously injured. Though Floyd received the Combat Action Badge, he said he is grateful to not have paid much of a price for the honor.

For Floyd, like many Soldiers, doing his job tends to put him in harm's way. But military intelligence is something he enjoys, especially when he is successful, he said.

Best case scenario, under interrogation the captive suspect provides information leading to a weapons cache, kidnapping victim or more insurgents, he said.

"It feels good to really do your job.

When you see the fruits of your labor that's when it really kicks in - you're playing a part in this war," Floyd said.

Though Floyd finds his work in military intelligence rewarding, being deployed for a year does have its drawbacks, he said.

"I'm newly married and my wife is pregnant with our first born, so that's been the hardest part - not being there for her," Floyd said.

As much as he can, Floyd puts his family first, he said.

When not being a family man or fighting terrorism, Floyd indulges in one of his many passions. His interests include sports, chess, reading, table tennis and billiards, among others, he said.

A consummate competitor, Floyd works out religiously and even fancies himself a so-called "gym rat," he said.

Upon redeployment Floyd plans on attending the Defense Language Institute to study Arabic or Farsi and wants to try out for the all-Army basketball team, he said.

When he becomes a noncommissioned officer, Floyd would like to put his combat experience to use and positively influence recruits as a drill sergeant, he said.

Even further down the line, Floyd is interested in returning to Iraq as a contractor, becoming a professional barber, fireman or police officer, or earning a business degree, he said.

For Floyd, the sky's the limit. But for now he remains grounded and is just trying to live one day at a time, he said.

The everyday indirect and small-arms fire Floyd hears serve as a constant reminder of the mission at hand. It's no wonder the family members who took him out of poverty are the people he looks to during the hard times, he said.

"I have a personal relationship with God, so I pray and I talk to my family when I can, just to hear their voices makes me calm down," Floyd said.

Not only does he find comfort in his family members, but his diligence down-range is inspiring them, he said.

"I used to look up to my big brothers," Floyd said. "Now they look up to me."